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**Memory of Communism and Post-
communism in Czech Republic, Through the
Eyes of Younger Generation—A Case Study**

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Abstract

After twenty-six years of fall of communism in Czech Republic, the younger generation has grown up in a democratic and free-market civil society, without direct experience in communism. The fall of communism and the radical changes to a democratic capitalism society marked one of the most important moments in the nation's recent history. What and how those younger individuals remember and think about communism and post-communism interests me. In this paper, I would like to investigate memory of communism among Czech students, which they obtained from family stories, school and other ways, and the personal memory of post-communism, and how they formed this memory. My data was collected by semi-structured interviews with 21-25 years-old students in Charles University. I found that generally the younger generations are not interested in talking about communism, and their memories of communism are overall negative. The family memory in communism of the majority interviewees can be considered as "normal": no persecution and violence. The school teaching about communism history is criticized as being too simple, only providing basic facts. The interviewees' memories about communism are influenced less by their family stories, but more by official narrative, which they absorbed via reading and education. In terms of memory of past twenty-six years, European integration and technical development are two major issues of younger generation's life. The majority of them characterized their youth as more opportunities, Europeanized and globalized compared with their parents'. Joining European Union and Schengen Area is the consensus reached by majority of interviewees as one of most important changes after 1989. With the reference of communism, they evaluated the post-communism changes in the society as great success with tiny problems.

Abstrakt

Čtvrt století po pádu komunismu vyrostla v České republice v podmínkách demokratické, tržní a občanské společnosti mladá generace bez přímé zkušenosti s komunismem. Pád komunismu a radikální změny ve prospěch demokratické a kapitalistické společnosti představují jeden z nejdůležitějších momentů v národních dějinách. Co a jak si dnešní mládež pamatuje o komunismu a myslí o postkomunismu? Tato práce zkoumá paměť komunismu, kterou si mládež přináší ze školy, z rodinných vyprávění a jiných zdrojů, formování jejich vlastní paměti o proměnách postkomunistické společnosti. Data byla shromážděna prostřednictvím semi-strukturovaných interview se studenty Univerzity Karlovy ve věku 21-25 let. Práce došla ke zjištění, že mladá generace obecně nemá zájem mluvit o komunismu a jejich paměť komunismu je obecně záporná. Na druhé straně většina rodinných vyprávění o komunismu vypadá "normálně", žádná perzekuce, žádné násilí. Školní výuka je hodnocena velmi kriticky jako zjednodušená, přinášející jen základní fakta o několika důležitých událostech. Vzpomínky respondentů na komunismus jsou méně ovlivněny rodinnými historiemi než oficiálním narativem, který se k nim dostává prostřednictvím čtení a vzdělání. Vzhledem ke vzpomínání na uplynulých dvacet pět let zahrnujících integraci do EU a technologického rozvoje jsou v životě mládeže zdůrazňována dvě hlavní témata. Většina respondentů charakterizuje své mládí jako obsahující více příležitostí, evropštější a globálnější, než bylo mládí jejich rodičů. Na vstupu do Evropské unie a Schengenu se shodla většina respondentů jako na nejdůležitějších změnách, které nastaly po roce 1989. S ohledem na charakter komunismu hodnotí proměny postkomunistické společnosti jako velmi úspěšnou story, i když je stále co zlepšovat.

Klíčová slova

komunismus, postkomunismus, individuální paměť, mládež

Keywords

Communism, post-communism, individual memory, youth

Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague 4.20.2015

Meng Zhou

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Institute of International Studies Master thesis proposal
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M.A. DISSERTATION PROJECT

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Term:

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Title:

Memory of Communism and Post-communism in Czech Republic Through Eyes of Young generation--A Case Study

Supervisor:

Lecturer Maria Asavei Ph.D.

Aim of the project (10 lines):

The purpose of this exploratory approach is to open the ground for more detailed and broad research in the future on how Czech young students remember communism and post-communism. This study does not pretend to offer definite conclusions, which could be generalized for the entire young generation of the country. What this dissertation attempts to offer is a limited version of aspects of students' memories and the research of this aspects is based mostly on semi-structured interviews with Czech students from Charles University in Prague.

Research question/questions (10 lines):

1) what the Czech young students in Charles University remember about communism; 2) How do they form certain memories about this period with analysis case by case; 3) what do they remember about the period after 1989; 4) how do they evaluate and reflect on communism and post-communism.

Proposed methodology (20 lines):

I would like to do the qualitative research by semi-structured interview among young Czech students in Charles University in Prague. All the interviewees were born after 1989, have no direct influence of communism

Proposed structure of chapters:

Introduction; theoretical background, literature review, methodology, results and analysis and conclusion

Selected sources/primary, secondary (25 commented titles):

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Clarke. D (2014) Communism and Memory Politics in the European Union.
Confino A, (1997). Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method

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1. Introduction

The 1989 moment marked a turning change in the recent history of Central and Eastern Europe, which is even “arguably the most significant political transformation of the second half of the twentieth century” (Jay, 2003:xvi). After the fall of communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, previous communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe have experienced fundamental changes: from rigid totalitarian regimes to creation of functioning democratic political systems; from state-planned economy to free market economy, and gradual growth of civil society and rule of law. In the case of the Czech Republic, the post-communism government made the strategy to “return to Europe” and reform the country towards the goal to join European Union. In 2004, Czech Republic have met requirements for membership in the European Union and finally “returned” to Europe. After that, the situation and problems Czech Republic confronted with are less connected with “communism”, but resembles other developed countries more. Some may argue that “post-communism” is not a proper term to describe Czech Republic since it now performs as normal European countries. However, I believe that “post-communism” is still a functioning term in social sciences while in socio-psychological level the communist past still casts a shadow on people’s mindset. The majority of current population has studied and lived under communism. Even for younger generation who has not any communist experience, they live with the influence of communism from their family members. Communist heritage is not quite visible but still mentally influential. Even with the twenty-six years distance from communist regime, it is hardly to say that the influence of communism has faded away and cleaned up in current Czech society. Therefore, in this paper, I apply the term “post-communism” to describe the whole post-1989 period in the Czech Republic.

After 1989, in memory studies of Central and Eastern Europe, communism became a major topic. The majority of research focused on the official attempts in mastering and “making sense of” communism in macro level: memory politics in post-communist countries; analysis of national or regional memory practices; discussion about how to evaluate and remember certain historical figures or events. Individual memory, especially the communism memory of younger generation was less studied. The young men and women have not experienced

communism first hand. However, their individual post-memory provides a fruitful ground for investigating the past.

The youth can inherit the communist memory from family members and also from school, commemoration activities, reading and other cultural practices. The research on youth memory can provide a chance to see how different factors interacted and mixed to create certain kinds of memory. The content of memory shapes their understanding and evaluation of communist history. Post-communism is not the major topic of memory study at the present, probably because it is still too close to us. Personal and family stories can reflect how individual perceives societal changes after 1989. The Czech Republic society has witnessed a radical reform and the European integration. What remained as memory among young students and how do they reflect it have scarcely been heard. Dealing with communist memory is also important as a reference system in evaluating and rethinking post-communist reform and the current society. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research of two periods at the same time. The purpose of this exploratory approach is to open the ground for more detailed and broad research in the future on how Czech young students remember communism and post-communism. This study does not pretend to offer definite conclusions, which could be generalized for the entire young generation of the country. What this dissertation attempts to offer is a limited version of aspects of students' memories and the research of this aspects is based mostly on semi-structured interviews with Czech students from Charles University in Prague.

In this paper, more specifically, I will apply empirical explorative research to investigate: 1) what the Czech young students in Charles University remember about communism; 2) How do they form certain memories about this period with analysis case by case; 3) what do they remember about the period after 1989; 4) how do they evaluate and reflect on communism and post-communism. In the process, I also hope to highlight the main concerns of young Czech students about the nation's recent history. While I draw upon literature on Czech collective memory practices and on theories of collective memory, individual memory, the primary source of this research is the data from semi-structured interviews with twelve students from Charles University in Prague. I employ qualitative approach to reveal and analyze the memory of communism and post-communism among them.

The structure of the thesis unfolds as follows: it begins with theoretical frameworks on collective memory, historical remembering and individual memory, with the focus on the importance of individual memory to explain why research on individual memory is necessary in memory studies. Then I will briefly outline the official collective memory practices in the Czech Republic. The theoretical context of this research, is situated within the youth studies in post-communist countries. In methodological chapter, I will firstly emphasize on why I choose semi-structured interview as data-collecting method. Then, I will explain the study design and I will evaluate both the qualities and limitations of my research data. More specifically, I will depict the whole process of semi-structured interviews, especially situations which probably affect data collection. In the results and discussion chapter, I will tackle the phenomenon of unwillingness to talk (the refusal to talk) about communism and I will analyze the reasons for this refusal. Furthermore, I will attempt to analyze how the memory of communism and post-communism was/is formed among the Czech students. In other words, I attempt to investigate the various ways in which individual memory has been formed through: family stories and remembrances about the past, school education; and other venues of cultural production of memory. The second part of the chapter will deal with the memory of post-communism. Just like the first part, the memory of post-communism will be displayed. How Czech students perceive and reflect the recent past will be analyzed afterwards. The outstanding concerns from the interviews also constitute an important part of this chapter. Finally in conclusion section, I will attempt to draw all threads of diverse findings together to answer my research questions and make suggestions for future research. My investigation attempts to show that though the family memory offers vivid details about the communist life, the common perception and conception of communism among young Czech students is actually under the greater impact of the official narratives. The memory of post-communism reflects general positive upward trend in the conception of the past twenty-six years. The frequent issues of post-communist memory are closely connected with globalization and technology advancement, which indeed imply that according to the Czech young generation, the society is gradually characterized as “a normal developed one”.

2.Theoretical background

In this chapter, I try to disentangle why the individual memory is important to memory study. Firstly, I will focus on what is collective memory, though there is no all encompassing definition of the term. Secondly, due to the fact that both history and collective memory deal with the past, I will differentiate them to clarify the scope of the collective memory study and history. Thirdly, I will propose that individual memory can be a challenge to collective memory and be a chance to expand and enrich collective memory.

2.1Collective Memory

There is a growing amount of researches on collective memory, since the term was firstly used by Maurice Halbwachs—the father of modern collective memory studies in 1920s. He introduced this term from psychology into social science studies; however, the term is loosely defined by different researchers. There is no consensus concerning the precise definition of collective memory even until now as it applies to diverse subjects and disciplines.

The term “collective memory” can be easily challenged because there is no collective organ and organism for memory functioning in collective form. Halbwachs, as the proponent of the term in social science study, did not give a precise definition; but he emphasized one feature—the “social contextualization of all individual memories”(Halbwachs. 1992, p42) or “social frame” to avoid the possible misunderstanding. According to him, “collective memory” cannot be understood if not referring to the "social frames." He writes: "No memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections."(ibid.p43) Here, he implied that within a social framework, during people’s interaction and communication, memory can be shared within certain group. For example, when we think of memory of childhood, the personal memory is always socially connected with our family groups, a certain education context, and people remembered those memory “in harmony” with others (Halbwachs.1980. p25, 48). It is also not uncommon that autobiographical memories, for example, can be shared in communication and interaction with others, which cannot be embodied by other people. Therefor, even without shared organs, people still can have the second-

hand memory as collective memory. There is difference between this two kind of collective memory: one can be collectively remembered on similar experience within a social group; the other can be collectively shared certain memory of certain part of the group as second-hand memory. A social framework provide a “language” for subjects recalling their past so that it can shape individual memory with influence of groups. Halbwachs gives examples of social frame in existence of groups, “up to and including the nation”, however, he also did not clearly stated what exactly social frame work is. Further Halbwachs strengthened the characteristic of collective memory, but failed to define what collective memory itself is. A social frame, which is essential for collective memory in Halbwachs’s theory, was understood as “an implicit or explicit structure of shared social concerns, values, experiences, narratives” by Assman(2008.p63). The shared values, practices as social frame created “we-ness” and marked certain boundaries of collectivity. In this sense, people within the same social frame are the subjects of collective memory. At the same time, according to Assman (2008), the past cannot be “remembered”, as said before, no collective organs for remembering; however, it can only be “memorized”. So the collective memory has to be acquired by learning, like participation of rites and commemoration. In his description, memory shared by communication and interaction are not considered as collective memory, though he thinks the collective memory is an umbrella term for many different kind formats of memory(ibid). And collective memory can be transmitted generation by generation in various forms, like visual and verbal signs, institution of education, mass media, monuments, commemoration rites (Assman, 2006).

Alon Confino (1997) defined collective memory broadly as “the representation of the past and the making of it into shared cultural knowledge by successive generations” (p138) in ‘vehicles of memory’, such as books, films, museums, commemorations and others. In Confine’s opinion, collective memory is the representation of past, not memory of past, which we have to consider who brought what as the representation. Collective memory also has to become part of cultural knowledge to pass over to generations in various forms: books, films, museums and memorials. Here he gives examples of how collective memory should be displayed and transformed for passing over to next generations. Confine implied that collective memory needed to be carried and transformed with certain form. In this way, the shared memory among

people's brains within a collective group is not collective memory. Collective memory must have some form, "vehicles of memory" materialized or ritual, to solidify it.

Halbwachs' description of collective memory is about the focus of study. According to him, some shared memories or similar experiences and feelings in the memory of past among many individuals can be regarded as collective memory; while for other researchers this kind of memory is not collective memory. For example, according to Confino's definition, collective memory must have "vehicles of memory", like memorial of Holocaust victims, museum of communism; while shared memory in the minds of Jewish people from concentration camp in Second World War is not considered collective memory.

2.2 Collective memory and collective remembering

With the different understandings of collective memory of the two main ideas, some researchers introduced differences between the collective memory and collective remembering to clarify the research issue. Collective remembering is closer to Halbwachs' "collective memory", that it is some kind of ongoing, dynamic process. Dudai(2002) claimed that the collective remembering involves the "repeated reconstruction of representation of past."(ibid,p35). According to Wertsch and Roediger (2008), the collective remembering is an active process which involves the contention and contestation among people(ibid). Here they did not just claim the activeness of collective remembering, but also indicate that it is not peaceful to research the collective remembering. And during the individual communication, individual's remembering will influence each other and form certain collective remembering. However, every personal remembering is different even on the same event, so it normally happened that the collective remembering is in process and unstable. They were concerned how collective remembering formed. In Assmann's account, collective remembering has an ongoing and vital connection with "contemporary cultural discourse and identity" (Assmann,1997). He also emphasized the ongoing and unstable characteristics of collective remembering, and also the context of it—cultural discourse. He further mentioned that collective remembering is very important for identity, which we will discuss later. In total, we

can say that collective remembering is in process and changing with the change of the social framework.

However, the collective memory used by many researchers, is more stable and like a body of shared knowledge or information with concrete form. For Dudai, collective memory is a “static base of knowledge with collective remembering”(Dudai, 2002, p46). It is a solidified version of active and ongoing collective remembering. And it is also viewed as “sort of objective representation of the past in building of memorials and expansion of museums, representation of the past in film and television”(Wertsch & Roediger, 2008, p321). They added the purpose of collective memory and the normal forms of it like Confine’s idea. If we synthesize the ideas above, maybe we can put it in this way. The collective memory has certain forms as ‘vehicle of culture’, which solidify collective remembering, to serve to certain goals. Here they implied that the collective memory can be used as a tool for certain aims. Now the memorials, monuments, institutes and museums can be regarded as collective memory and as we can see, they usually serve for some goal, and sometimes try to form a certain identity. This is why many researchers consider that collective memory is somehow official and given from the above and imposed by those in power positions.

For example, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin is a form of materialized collective memory, for the purpose of remembering the dark history of the Holocaust. It was initiated and built by the official power to show the Holocaust towards Jews. They wanted to solidify the Holocaust memory even after all the survivors and witnesses of the traumatic event have passed away. With the Memorials as landscape of the city, younger generation, who do not have direct experience of the Holocaust and have no family connection to the event, can still have the collective memory about the brutal killings that took place decades ago. The Memorials help to install a memory, which one does not have personally.

In this situation, some may doubt whether the so-called collective memory is memory at all. It seems that it does not have collective biographical organ to generate collective memory, and how come that people can have memory about the past they did not experience directly. It appears reasonable to rethink memory in its social and cultural dimension, whether it has to be memory of first-hand experience. It widely

happened that we had our family memory about our ancestors' legend, which emerged many generations ago. The collective memory is memory about the past, and in reality, it can be memory of a time with no survivors. In this sense, we need to differentiate the collective memory and history, because both of them are concerned with the past.

2.3 Collective Memory and History

The difference between collective memory and history is also a major concern of many researchers. According to Assmann(1997), collective memory is connected with “contemporary cultural discourse and identity”, whereas it is not the case for history. And when talking about collective memory, he said, “the past is not simply ‘received’ by the present. The past is modeled, invented, reinvented and reconstructed by present.”(ibid.p32). Collective memory usually serves certain goal, and to achieve that goal, collective memory even tends to “inhabit the past and to furnish it with images of its own making”(ibid). However, the professional of historians won't allow any dress up of history to serve some purpose and history trends to neutralize the past and make it speak its own voice, strange as it may sound. History was not always the true version of past, but it aimed to get as closer as possible to the truth. Not to invent or reconstruct past to serve present purpose was warned continuously by historians; while it is even encouraged if it helps to reach the goal of collective memory. For history, it is what it is; for collective memory, it is what it should be.

To understand something historically for historian is to be aware of the complexity, to view it from multiple perspectives, to tolerate its ambiguities (Novick, 1999, p67). History is a complex system in which the past tries to be presented as real as possible. Historians aspired to provide an accurate account of the past no matter how ambiguous it is. However, collective memory is simple, seeing events from a single perspective and being not patient with ambiguities.

If necessary, part of the past may be distorted for a better service of present. For example, the monument of soldiers who resist invaders and protect the land, language and culture of homeland, is helpful to strengthen the national pride and to encourage the citizens to protect their nation if in danger. The action to recognize

some selfish and cowardice soldiers as heroes to advocate ordinary people to fight for the nation can be typical example of collective memory. Historians will investigate the truth: perhaps one indeed died in fighting with enemy, while another died when taking shower. They can all be memorized as national heroes in collective memory practice, while for historians only the first one died in fighting as real national heroes.

In total, though they both deal with the past, collective memory involves identity formation, simplify the past and ignore finding that do not fit into the narrative. However, history tries to arrive at an objective account of the past, no matter what happened. It also develops with new finding.

2.4 Individual Memory and Collective Memory.

Many researchers agree that there is a relative powerlessness of individual memories in process of collective memory construction. Researchers like Schudson(1995) claimed that since memory can only be expressed through “cultural construction of language in socially structured patterns of recall”(ibid, p346), there is no such thing like individual memory. Wulf Kansteiner also hold the similar idea that the cultural tools we use are “inseparable from the social standards of plausibility and authenticity they embody”(Kansteiner , 2002, p181). In this sense, individual’s memory is constructed by social framework and so the seemingly personal memory is still socially constructed. Individual memory does not exist. I also admit that everyone lives in certain structure of society and cultural framework; however, people are still diverse and the nature of initiative among individuals cannot be denied. The individual memory not only exists but also functions in collective memory study.

The lack of active agency makes the social science research on individual memory not easy. Wood(1999) says that in postwar Europe, “collective representations of the past represent the conscious purpose of social groups”(ibid. p346), and collective action has a high degree of intentionality. For example, studying monuments and memorials of Second World War is a good way to know what is collectively remembered and purposely maintained about the War. This form of collective express can be kept as solid research materials. While individual memory is

constrained in the realm of psychology, not in the study of social sciences and history. According to Halbwachs(1980), individual memory is formed through dialogue with or within social groups. It is impractical to investigate how individual memory forms in dialogues in Social Science research. The difficulties to investigate the formation of individual memory can be one possible reason for researchers to deny the importance of individual memory.

Individual memory can be a challenge to the dominant discourse of collective memory. It can be easily observed that sometimes the individual memory is in conflicts with the collective memory narrative. As we mentioned before, it can be normal to construct new collective memory by inventing and simplifying facts. The collective memory uses some simple and generalized descriptions about the past, while the individual memory can provide true facts and may challenge the official discourse. For example, in early communist propaganda, the communist party portrayed landlords and capitalists simplistically as cold-blooded, cruel and mercenary. Some mercy landlords also were intentionally described as brutal. In this situation, the individual memory can be the powerful challenge of the fallacious so-called powerful collective memory and to claim innocence of some mercy landlords in their local sentence.

The invented, reconstructed and twisted collective memory in the service of some identities and political goals can be regarded as ideology in essence. Now “ideology” is a contaminated word and reminds people of fake ideas from governments. The collective memory somehow emerged to function and serve similar roles. The collective memory in many countries concealed some parts of facts and can be dressed up for purpose. Not everyone who died in invader-resist battles died with the belief in the glory of the nation or protection of homeland. They maybe fought just for food offered by the army. Or even they were forced to join the army and they did not do their best to fight and win. All cases can be possible, but with the simplistic and clear description of collective memory, people were portrayed as identical group. However, individual memory, in spite of very limited scope on general past, provides a chance to see the real past and overcome the simplistic intentional narrative as the constructed collective memory. Within studies of collective memory, individual memory is a way to truth, a challenge the dominant discourse.

Another major reason for the importance of individual memory is that the study of individual memory is a try to have power to select what can be collective memory. In *Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory*, Crane (1997) supported the importance of individual memory study. In this paper, she analyzed how the history and collective memory formed. Historical facts were picked up by professional historians, from historical experience. The collective memory was formed by intentional selection. While with the development of history as a discipline, the body of historical knowledge expanded. In the beginning, history focused on more serious topics like the politics, war and foreign affairs. Issues of daily life, like the social patterns in Victoria Britain, the decoration of house, are preserved as collective remembering by people in that time. And some of them chose a “vehicle of culture”, like museums, to preserve the collective remembering as solid collective memory. With development of history discipline in twentieth century, the “small” issues, like internal decoration of family also came into as the topic of history research. The similar process can happen with individual and collective memory. Individual memory can also enter the collective memory narrative and with new emergence of individual case, the collective memory also refreshed.

The collective memory is not always functioning in daily life. Green (2004) think that research on individual memory help to “remain open to the richness and variety of individual consciousness and try to find spaces within or between dominant discourses”(ibid, p38) to enrich collective memory. The collective memory also needs details in it to express the freshness of real life and become more touching and effective to serve certain purpose in a more effective way. For example, a monument, which simply says that it is erected in the memory of The Berlin Wall with the numbers who died for crossing it, cannot arouse the feelings of people who do not have similar experience. However, with support of many concrete stories of real life in that time, viewers can feel the vivid past even the atmosphere. Those individual cases in the memorials of Berlin Wall make the past fresh, touchable and human. In this case the individual memory has become part of the solidified collective memory with its own vivid image. And also sometimes, the individual memory reenacted in collective memory can change the content and its effort in memorizing the past. Individual memory is the place of fresh blood for collective memory.

In total, research on individual memory can provide concrete personal facts to challenge or serve the collective memory narrative. Individual memory is also important in forming new collective memory narrative. In this paper, I would like to use the study on individual memory of communism and post-communism to examine how individuals reflect the communism past with influence of collective and individual memory and whether individual memory is forming a collective remembering narrative for post-communism era.

3. Literature Review. Filling a Gap in the Research on Youth Memory

3.1 *Communism memory studies*

There are many studies on communism memory among all the ex-socialist countries. In the book “The Unfinished Revolution: Making Sense of the Communist Past in Central-Eastern Europe”, James Mark(2010) provides a detailed analysis of how the communist memory has been presented after the fall of communism in previous communist countries as collective memory. He thinks that post-communist narrative was actually a culture of historical reinvention, in which “political parties, state-sponsored historical institutions, cultural sites and individuals packaged the meanings and memories of dictatorship to meet the needs of a new political system”(ibid. p215). In his study, he clearly pointed out that the politics of memory is in the service of the current needs and we cannot take those being represented as for granted. From his analysis there were some “official memory” installed by diverse groups with their intentions. In *Lieu de Memoire* like museums, monuments, memorials, historical research institutes and sites of terror and statues, the historical memory was set out to portray the previous regimes as rigid, brutal, criminal, violent, ridiculous and inhuman. He thinks the 1989 did not “lead to the sudden emergence of previously unacceptable ‘truthful’ narratives, but rather a new set of political and cultural values determining what could and could not be said” (ibid. P.xxvii). In the analysis of the role of the *Lieu de Memoire* towards communism, like museums, memorials, terror sites, he convincingly concluded that they were mostly established to criminalize communist regimes and invite people to criticize it, as well as to create

an “imagined community of a nation of victims”. It provides selective items and history to display and serve the public narrative of the “anti-communism” narrative.

In the second half of the book, he dealt with how individuals adjust their own communist experience in a new context. He conducted many interviews, mostly in Hungary among those born between 1918 and 1940. With the intention to find out personal challenges to the official narrative, he observed that many interviewees tended to present themselves as dissidents or victims who were brutally treated by communist regime, creating one-dimensional picture of communist memory. In this book he also implied that the new set of values may generate new forms of “dictatorship” on what should be remembered or not. As he highlighted in the book, ordinary people have the socio-political pressure to fit their life stories into monochromatic dominant image of totalitarian communism. However, in this research, he provided a general regional perspective not deeply case analysis country by country, and the interviews were mostly conducted with Hungarians. Thus we cannot apply his conclusions to other specific countries, like Czech Republic. Therefore, for my research on memory of post communism among young Czech students, it is necessary to firstly investigate whether in people’s mind there is indeed the impression of communism as criminal, inhuman, violent as official narrative among younger generation. Secondly, my research attempts to disentangle whether in current Czech society, there is a certain pressure for people to fit their own life story into the official one. James Mark’s research provides us a bigger general image about how post-communist countries rethink and reinvent the recent history.

Tomas Sniegon (2003) demonstrates how collective memory of communism was built in Czech Republic after the fall of the regime. The author claims that Czech Republic, in early 1990s, was regarded as a state having the most consistent attitude towards communism compared with all the other post-Communist counterparts. In the late 1990s, right-wing parties dominated the Czech political life. The “old” communist party wanted to renew itself, therefore they discussed a lot on the guilt of the communist regime. The right-wing party was in favor of the idea to build the Czech national memory based on communist terror as a way to unite the nation. The Office of the Documentation and the Investigation of the Crimes and Communism¹,

¹for more information, see the website <http://www.policie.cz/clanek/the-office-for-the-documentation->

which was established in 1995 to investigate and document the communist crimes after the fall of Communism, actively institutionalized collective communist memory in Czech Republic. Being a part of the Service for the Criminal Investigation Police, this Office was established and governed by the Direction of the Minister of the Interior. The documentation activity of the Office is even more important to build new collective communist memory. This official institution does not just collect, analyze and evaluate materials and documents about the communist regimes' crime but also displays all the information to the public in suitable ways. Publications were distributed free of charge especially to public libraries and to the whole system of education; mass media and universities are also in cooperation with the Office to report new investigations and hold lectures and seminars on the communist crimes. The post-Communist government also actively launched a study about contemporary Czech history, like Warsaw Pact invasion in 1968. Apart from that, the government financed many Czech universities and academic institutions, like The Institute for Contemporary History in Prague, (dealing with the modern Czech history study). Moreover, according to the Czech penalty law from 2001, any form of public denial and questioning of "Nazi and Communist genocides or other Nazi or Communist crimes against humanity" is rendered illegal. The Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes², which was set up in 2007 in Prague, resembled the Office of the Documentation and Investigation of the Crimes and Communism.

This new institute aimed to disclose the brutal and unlawful practices from Nazism and Communism and to provide "moral satisfaction" and education to the society. The Institute focused on the study and evaluation of the "period of oppression and the period of Communist totalitarian dictatorship, especially security forces..... and criminal activity of Communist Party of Czechoslovakia as well as other organizations based on communist ideology" (Act of 8 June 2007, P3). Furthermore, this institute also tends to "analyze reasons and ways of destruction of a democratic regime during the Communist totalitarian power, documents the involvement of Czech and foreign persons in the Czechoslovak communist regime and in the resistance against it" (Act of 8 June 2007, P4). This institute is in the hands of Senate, the upper house of the Parliament. Only the members of Senate can make the final

[and-the-investigation-of-the-crimes-of-communism-police-of-the-czech-republic.aspx](#) accessed, 20/4/2015

²for more information, see the website <http://www.ustrcr.cz/en> accessed 20/4/2015

decision of the institute. Therefore, who controls the Senate can control the institute and its policy. A former member of the Communist Party cannot be selected to be the broad member of the institute. So does the former collaborator of any communist-related organization, like security service, intelligence service, military organization, and Warsaw Pact. Though this institute focuses on both the Nazi dominated period and communism time, there are no restrictions for membership of the broad concerning individual relationship with Nazi rule. This indicates that the power behind the institute thinks the memory of communist dictatorship is more important for “national memory” and “totalitarian study”. It also indicates that the institute was set up originally for the study of communist dictatorship

After joining European Union, Czech Republic’s communist memory politics also becomes part of the whole European plan on memory. The totalitarian regimes study is also part of the European Union’s memory policy to “imagine Europe” in supranational levels (Peter J. Verovšek, 2015; David Clarke, 2014). In 1970s, the shared memory of Holocaust was the “European entry ticket”. After the enlargement towards Eastern Europe of European Union, post-authoritarian member states brought the new memory of communist and the feeling of collective guilt “from the historical mistakes that left [these states] behind the Iron Curtain for 50 years”(Lašas, 2008, p102) into European narratives. Though many post-communist countries also shared the memory of their fascist past, the memory of the Holocaust does not receive as much attention as the memory of the recent communist crimes. For many Western members of European Union, it is not easy to admit the brutality of Stalinism when compared with Nazism. After the accession of Central and Eastern Europe, a common European memory project is the major concern of the European Union’s memory politics. The memory of communism is, together with memory of Nazi Germany’s crimes, a part of “anti-totalitarian” memory to condemn both Stalinism and Nazism. Cited by David Clarke (2014, p99), Regine Robin (2009) thinks that EU “placed communist crimes on par with Nazi atrocities” by providing support for anti-communist memory policies in Central and Eastern Europe in order to whitewashing the complicity status with fascism of those new member states. There were many projects sponsored by European Union in totalitarian study and memory. However, Clarke thinks that those approaches for commemoration failed to suit diverse national-specific characteristics and in terms of motivation in memory of

communism, the national frame is still essential in each country's commemoration and study practice. He argued that EU intentionally promotes the significance of the memory of the Holocaust as a commonly shared European memory to answer the need for shared values among all EU members. European institutions had implemented many measures starting with 1990s to make sure the genocide against Jews in Europe is a cornerstone of European memory. With the process of enlargement in 2004, European institutions changed their memory agenda, to favor an anti-totalitarian memory, including the memory of both communism and fascism. In 2008, the Senate of Czech Republic sponsored a conference about the crimes of communism and signed "Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Memory"³ to require former socialist regimes to "inform all European minds to the same extent as the Nazi regime's crimes did". This can be viewed as an attempt to adjust the communism memory to the bigger image of European shared memory. Later (on 18th March 2009), the Czech Presidency of European Union launched a Public Hearing to call for establishing a "Platform of European Memory and Conscience"⁴ and "Remembrance Day for Victims of Nazism and Totalitarian Communism on 23 August"⁵. 23 August is the day of signing the secret Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between Nazi Germany and Soviet Union as non-aggression treaty in 1939. They emphasized this day as a combination memory of crimes of fascism and communism. The Platform of European Memory and Conscience was eventually founded in October 2011, to produce educational materials and exhibitions to spread the memory of communism crimes in Europe, especially in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovak Republic⁶.

In conclusion, with the specific socio-political situation in post-communist Czech Republic, during the investigation and documentation of communist crimes, the authorities have institutionalized the collective communism memory focusing on the communism crimes and the brutality of the regime. With the aim of building commonly shared European memory, the European Union's memory politics also strengthened the totalitarianism aspect of communism to create an umbrella for both

³ For the content, <http://www.praguedclaration.eu/> accessed 20/04/2015

⁴ more information to see the website <http://www.memoryandconscience.eu/> accessed 20/04/2015

⁵ Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union (2009), "European Conscience and Crimes of Totalitarian Communism: 20 years after". http://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/tiskove_zpravy/slyseni-brusel-final-conclusions.pdf (accessed 15th April, 2015)

⁶ More information to <http://www.memoryandconscience.eu/about-the-platform/> (accessed 15th April, 2015)

memory of communism and fascism after East enlargement of EU in 2004. With the practices of these two major authorities, the simplistic picture of brutality and dictatorship of communism was installed in public space as the official narrative of communism in Czech Republic.

3.2 Post-communism youth study

Due to the fact that there are few studies about the youth memory of post-communist period, here I will summarize research concern with the youth study in post-communist countries and memory of communism in post-communism time. Youth studies within post-communist countries from Central European region can provide a wider framework to understanding how the young generations remember the past in other countries, in similar socioeconomic and political situations. This larger perspective might help us to envision youth's situation in the Czech Republic (though we have to admit that there are different situations and problems that various post-socialist countries faced).

1989-Young People and Social Change After the Fall of Berlin Wall (Leccardi et.al, 2012) is one of the major (and few) publications on post-communism youth study in Europe by Council of Europe Publishing in 2012. This book follows the Birmingham School postulates, and tries to present the image of youngsters during political, economic, social and cultural changes in post-communism European societies. Though for the first post-communism “free generation” (born after 1989) in Central Eastern Europe, they actually did not have the direct experience of communism, they have to “come to grips on a daily basis with the legacy of former Soviet-style socialism”(ibid, 4), and they are in fact the “custodian of precious cultural resources”(ibid. p5). Though they do not have firsthand communist experience, they still live in a society with a strong communism heritage. Ken Roberts (2012) claimed in his research that generally speaking, in current Central and Eastern Europe, young people think the fall of communism in 1989 and the communism past are just part of the history of the country, and not living memory(ibid. p45). Regarding the generation, born after 1989, their knowledge about the communism is formed in school, by family members, books or other online and offline media. Kovacheva (2012) addressed the question of how the interplay of public images and academic theories of youth both reflect and influence the youth condition in post-communist

Bulgaria. Youth people have three major images in Bulgaria, these representations being influenced by the change to the transitional society. Their images formed depend upon the social, economic and political order in a society. The youth were considered as the only group liberated from the state control. It is easier for those newly born youth to adjust to the new environment than for those who had spend forty years under communism, (almost completely two different systems). In the research she implied that the young “free generation” does not have to struggle to adjust themselves to the new environment with the old remaining of previous system, compared with the older generation. In this situation, for younger generations, they may have different memories and conceptions about communism and post-communist experience.

Panto and Sekulic (2012) applied pilot research to deal with historical and biographical memory of young people in Sarajevo who were born in the 1989. In the article authors compared how some young people think differently their past, present and future. In terms of historical memory, due to the specific experience of Sarajevo after 1989, young students here remembered the Tito-time as some stable, quiet and safe time from their parents’ narrative. They remembered that the city was more beautiful, and people were very happy and more content with themselves. Ordinary people still have a chance to realize themselves eventually, no matter what their origins are. People can achieve almost everything with their work. At that time everything was achievable through work. There was law and order, which make the society safe and stable. People did not have to fear for their safety or unemployment. In the past no one was without money and they even expressed their desire to come back. However, the authors did not analyze why the young students think in this way, partly because they focused on the importance of the “biographical memory” in building process of young people’s own life experience. One of the interviewee posits that “looking at what is happening now. Everything has slipped out of control and the police don’t have the mandate to confront things.”(ibid. p137) The memory of the communist time in Sarajevo can be considered as complains of the present. This case is very special because in smoothly running post-communism societies, youngsters are viewed as beneficiaries like in the Bulgarian example shown, and normally it is the old generation that misses the stable, quieter communism times.

During the communism period, almost all the socialist countries shared many common features, like the planned economy, state-control factories, free education, health care and so on. However, after the fall of communism, ex-communist countries took different roads. The catastrophic experience during post-communist period in Sarajevo has significantly influenced how people perceive and remember the communism past. Youth in Sarajevo mentioned genocides and the many people who died during the nationalistic wars and conflicts. They are too young to recall the war but they got the memory from their readings, or from the stories told by their parents. One interviewee said the memory was terrible and they tried hard to forget it a little bit and cover it with other things. One remembered that his family was in exile, but his father had to stay here as a doctor. One remembered disgusting things, which he cannot even describe. He does not think he has trauma but he does not want to talk about it. For him, it happened, it finished and they survived it. We shouldn't go back to the past. Let it go. They indeed had a catastrophic experience and memory, but for self-protection, they do not want to recall it. They do not want to live in the traumatic memory of past and it is better to move on for the future. Here from the description of the paper, we can know how current young people in Sarajevo remembered the past, by the means of their first or second hand memory. However, the authors did not go further to analyze the role of memory about communism and post-communism in Sarajevo in shaping or impacting their view of current society and their hope for the future. It is common that when talking about memory, we actually talk about the present. In this paper's case, those memories of Tito's time can reflect their underlying complains against the present situation. This research did not go deeply enough to connect young people's views in the past and present; However, it is a good explorative example to displaying how some young students in Sarajevo remember and think about their past (and present) and what is the major concern of young generation.

Jochen Tholen et al. (2012) revealed what happened to young people in rural villages in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. They focused on those who were generally ignored by researchers but actually made substantial population of those countries. After doing ten in-depth interviews in 2008, they found that almost all the factories that communism had dotted throughout the countryside were closed down in the initial phase of the market reform and the post-communist life was generally hard

for many people in the rural areas. Those people are typically poor, without proper jobs, living with no piped gas and water, and they had to work harder than before to make a living (more to see Bridge and Pine, 1998; Gvozdeva, 1999). They found that in spite of losing employment opportunities in factory, generally the rural population think they were not involved in the radical change of the system in 1989 and early 1990s like cities, and they still kept a similar life style. For people in the countryside, what was considered influential after the fall of communism is that they can work for themselves within their own farmland, unlike the collective farms in communism times. By the same token, the study shows how after the achievement of independence of their country, they can be proud of their own nation. In those countries, young people normally need to work in their farmland or to work away in bigger cities or abroad to maintain family's well being. They were short-time immigrant workers in cities. There is an obvious trend for young people to move to cities and even abroad for employment opportunities and more money. However, the majority of those immigrant workers won't settle down in the cities, due to the higher expenses to living here. The similar trend happened in other post-communist countries as well. This is a similar experience for many post-communist young people from the less developed villages.

In dealing with the relationship between younger generation and consumption, Michaela Pysnáková (2012) constructed semi-structured interviews with youth aged between 15 and 30. This research focused on how young people think of their own and others' consumer lifestyles in post-communism Czech Republic. In the research, the young generation uses consumer culture as an indication of their individualism, prestige and performance. And they also had the pressure to build their identity through individualized patterns of consumption. The post-revolution Czech youth connected conformity with lack of individuality (not with the rebelliousness), and they also view the individuality within consumption as a way to maintain their sense of autonomy. The post-communist Czech society, like its western counterparts, is characterized as a consumer society as well, and the younger generation in Czech Republic also lives under the same situation like those in the Western Europe. This article stresses that there still remain some communist heritages in current Czech Republic society, but at the same time, it also has certain characteristics like the Western societies. The consumer boom was one of the biggest changes in post-

communism daily life. With the market open and coming of Western companies, ex-communist society, like Czech Republic, witnessed the descent of higher quality, better services and diverse choices in consumer field and for young people. They can make use of the diversity in consumer goods to build their individuality. This article investigates how Czech young generation thinks of their consuming habits; However, the author fails to figure out their changes in terms of consumption attitude during the change of the social structure as she claimed, even though she described extensively the consuming experience of younger Czech youth in post-revolutionary context.

This book provides us a wider perspective about what young generations experienced during the post-communist time in various Central and south-Eastern European contexts. Though during this period different countries chose different approaches for transformation based on their diverse cultural, historical and political backgrounds, the similar structure in communist time and the similar goals to build democratic capitalism and to come back to Europe for many Central European countries have enabled those transformation societies to witness analogous phenomena to some extent. Furthermore, in the globalized world, easiness of traveling to other post-socialist countries and the higher chance to study abroad and to make friends from other countries also help young generation to form their own idea in comparison with other countries' transformations. Since there are not many studies about the post-communism memory, it is necessary for us to know what those young generations may experience in post-socialist countries.

4.Methodology

4.1 Reason

In this chapter, I will explain why I chose semi-structured interview as a research method for my dissertation and how I have conducted it to collect data. To make sense of what and how Czech young students remembered about communism and post-communism, I choose semi-structured interview as the way to collect data for this qualitative research. Qualitative research is a social inquiry form about how people interpret and understand their experiences (Holloway,1992. p2, Denzin & Lincoln, . 2004, p.2). It is a broad umbrella term (Inge et al, 2011) involving many

empirical methods, like in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, life stories and biographies (ibid). This approach allows researchers to identify what the study group thinks and provides an in-depth understanding of research issues. To understand how individuals and groups conceive their experience of the past as memory and “to explore the perspectives and experiences”(Holloway, 1997) of Czech “free generation” students, I will systematically collect, organize and interpret the textual materials which I obtained via talking and observation (Malterud, 2001. p398). In quantitative research, researchers can measure issues to generalize their finding to a broader population because random sampling in research can represent the general situation (Holloway, 1997. p16). However, conversely, the purpose of qualitative research is to make sense of and explain beliefs and achieve deeper information via “mining” experience of certain participants (ibid. p17), not the representative of general population (Hesse and Leavy, 2006,p146); thus so that the textual data from qualitative research cannot be generalized. In my research, the results only reflect how the participants remember and understand their life. How people remember and make sense of their communist and post-communist memory can vary, even among students who were all born after 1989 and study in Charles University.

The focus of qualitative research is to make sense of experience and conception of social life, which can be viewed from two sides. One side is the *verstehen*, which refers to how the study participants explain certain question (Snape et al.2003. Cited Ritchie et al.p7); the other side is *understanding*, namely how the researcher uses his own frame of reference on research issues. In my research, both *verstehen* and *understanding* are important to figure out the memory itself and how the memory formed. *Verstehen* allows participants to demonstrate experience, idea from their own perspective, in their own context and with their own words (ibid. P16). *Understanding* provides an outside perspective with different interpretive framework on research issues (ibid).

4.2 Semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interviews are most typically used in the collection of qualitative data to figure out people’s experience and belief and how they have formed it (Matthews & Ross.p222). It is also suitable for exploratory research, where there has

been little research. The current memory studies mainly focus on the memory of communism in post-communism situation; however, the individual memory and what and how people remember about the past twenty-six years is less studied. Semi-structured interview allows me to find out what young Czech generation remembers about communism and post-communism period, and how they interpret it in certain way. The format of the semi-structured interview also allows me to explore those unexpected issues and to identify and elaborate them deeply (Matthews & Ross.2010.p224). During the interviews, I have addressed only nine major questions and interviewees frequently lead our conversation to some new interesting issues helping me to understand the topic more deeply.

4.3 Participants Recruitment

In qualitative research, participants are purposively recruited. The qualitative research is not suitable for generalize the finding or to measure the prevalence of the topic(Hess and Leavy, 2006. p84). Gaining a detailed understanding is the aim of qualitative research. Therefore, their specific experience and inside knowledge of the research issue allows the researcher to study this topic in depth (ibid. p226). All interviewees in this research have been students born between 1990 and 1994, from different locations (rural and urban , south and north) of Czech Republic, studying Social Sciences at Charles University in Prague. They provide rich information for my research topic. The type of information these students provided is suitable for the investigation into the role of official collective memory and family remembrance in preserving memory among them. These students have been born after the fall of communist regime and they do not have a first-hand experience of living in the communist regime. Therefore, their memories about communism are shaped by various institutional or familial narratives such as: history courses, family memories, public memorials, school book, cinema production and so on. The respondents are social science students in a top university, so that they can provide their own insight thinking about their communism memory and how this memory was instantiated and to what ends. For the memory of post-communism study, they experienced the change and development of Czech society and still carried their family memory of post-communism. With the help of their learning and international horizon, they also can share their memories with the young generations of the other ex-socialist

countries. During their interaction with their peers and other ways of life in Czech society, they also provided valuable observations and analysis on how others think of this issue. The students I chose to interview are from different regions of Czech Republic: from cities like Prague, Brno, Pilsen, or from smaller places like the small village named Odolena Voda, the small village near Jablonec nad Nisou in northern Bohemia, the small village in previous Sudetenland and so on. I have tried to interview students from various regions in order to investigate how the changes after 1989 influence people's life and experience in different regions of the country.

The Snowball method is my major way to recruit my interviewees. Two interviewees are my friends in learning economical and political transformations in Central and Eastern Europe. Before I decided to conduct this research on February 2015, we have discussed many topics concerning communism and post-communism changes in Czech Republic in general. Yet, we have not tackled the issue of remembering this recent past. Both of them are socially and academically active so they know students with diverse backgrounds and with willingness to talk about communism and post-communism. Some of them accepted to take part in my interviews, some denied because of their tight schedule or unwillingness to talk about their past and the way they remember it for research purposes. New interviewees also helped me to recruit new ones for gaining more data. I also posted an advertisement on Facebook to recruit participants who are willingly to share their memory of communism and post-communism. No one answered my request for the interview. Therefore, the majority of interviewees were recruited in a snowball way.

In terms of the principle of saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p88), after ten interviews, I found that the further data collection becomes redundant. Though differences within personal memories were still obvious, the idea concerning the general content of memory of communism and post-communism is pretty much similar. After conducted another two interviews, I stopped. I also confirmed the credibility of my data with my teacher, who has taught communist history to both undergraduates and postgraduates, and other Czech young students in Charles University. They all confirmed that my data can reflect the general ideas of Czech students on communism and post-communism.

4.4 Subjectivity and reflexivity

One worry in semi-structured interview research is whether researchers bring their subjective influences during data collection and interpretation. The researcher and the participants may react to backgrounds, characteristics and positioning of the other, and “in this way each will contribute to the co-construction of reality during the interview process” (Finlay and Gough, 2003,P5). The researchers “social background, assumptions, positioning and behavior”(ibid) may influence their research process and data collection. Therefore, I cannot claim that all the information I collected from the interviews is objective in reflecting the reality of communist and post-communist remembrance. Another consideration in social science research is reflexivity. According to Mason (2000), reflexivity means that “researchers take constant stock of their actions and their role in the research process.” (ibid. p168). Researchers need to understand that they are part of the social world, which they investigate (Berg, 2007, p178). It requires the researchers explicitly to know how their values and knowledge impact the social research information production while they accumulate insight knowledge during the ongoing research. The interpersonal reflectivity is sensitive to the “situational dynamics between the research and researched”, which can impact the “creation of knowledge” (Hesse and Leavy, 2006,p146).

During my interviews, I have noticed that sometimes, especially in the interviews with the unknown participants whom I did not personally knew before, interviewees did not feel free to talk about their ideas, probably because I am from China, a communist country in their opinion⁷. In the pilot research, I found the interviewees were hesitant to speak negatively about communism, probably because they did not want to be offensive to me. Therefore, later on, I declared from the beginning that I would not feel offended if they criticize communism, because I myself also criticized it frequently and I did the interviews for research purposes, so I wanted to know how they truly remember and make sense of communism and post-communism. Before the interview started, I also talked with my interviewees about their research and study. I understand that it is not possible to obtain the totally objective data in social science research, especially when dealing with memory issues which changed along

⁷How my interviewees think of China as a communist country is too complicated and I will not elaborate it in writing.

time; here I have just tried my best in lowering interpersonal subjectivity. In the interviews with students whom I previously knew, I found they could talk more freely about how they remember and think of communism and post-communism. However, I also can feel that sometimes they want to “correct” my supposed pro-communism tendency, when I asked question about how they think of communist nostalgia⁸. With the interview ongoing, I also adapted some new issues from previous interviewees for later research. For example, one participant mentioned communist nostalgia and in later interviews I asked how and what do they think of communist nostalgia.

4.5 Study Design

I want to examine the content of the memory of communism and post-communism among Czech young students in Charles University, and how do they formed these memories about the past. Therefore, at first, I needed to know how do they think of communism and post-communism. Then I asked about their family memory of the both periods. In the study of Maurice Halbwachs (1994), the memory of family⁹ appears to be particularly significant in the experience of young people. The family memory remains an indispensable point of reference for the personal identity of family components. At the same time family also can retain its uniqueness over time in spite of some radical political, social and economic changes. The young generation does not have direct experience of communism and cannot remember what happened when they were young in the early 1990s, but they also indeed relive it somehow through the memory of other family members. The memory of the past also culturally opens for the young people the possibility of comparison between the present and past. I consider that the new post-communist generation, still lives somehow on the ashes of communism history and their life and goals are still connected with the communism past. In my pilot research, I found out that generally there is no course in the curricula about memory of post-communism in high school and some students may have courses focusing on economical and political transition only later in university. Thus, I only asked them about their class on memory of

⁸In some cases, when I asked how do they think of communist nostalgia, they may think it shows my pro-communism tendency, because I am from China.

⁹ In his study of collective memory, Maurice Halbwachs studied three forms of collective memory, the memory of family, memory of religious groups and memory of social classes. Here, from Carman and Carles' study, the memory of family is most obvious for post-communism generation.

communism. To understand how they formed (or framed) this memory, I asked whether they have other ways to know about communism and post-communism. For understanding better how they think of changes in the past twenty-six years, I designed further two questions on post-communism.

All twelve interviews were done during March and April in 2015. The interviews were conducted face-to face in English with Czech students of Charles University, from different regions of the country, aged between 21 and 25. I took notes during the interviews and I have also recorded it with all interviewees' permission. In the first part of the interview, the respondents were asked about communism: how and what do they think about communism in general (their basic understanding on what is communism); what is their family memory about the communist times; what was their studying memory in school concerning communism; how do they know about communism apart from family memory and school education. In the second part of the interview, the subject is post-communism: how do they find about post-communism; what is their family memory during post-communism change; what are other ways to know about post-communism; what are the most important changes in Czech Republic after 1989; how do they evaluate the post-communism changes in society. I followed this questions structure, but when new questions came out, I have also asked questions of know to understand the new issues. For example, after one interviewee mentioned the nostalgia for communism, I decided to ask the further interviewees if our conversation came to views of different groups on communism. Due to the fact that every case is somehow different, sometimes I changed the order of the questions and sometimes we went further in detailing more certain questions. During the transcription of the interviews, I made all data anonymous and only kept interviewees' hometown, major, age and gender.

4.6Ethical issues

According to the Belmont Report¹⁰ (the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Behavioral Research, 1979), individuals should be provided with enough information about the research. At the same time, the respondents should participate in the research study voluntarily, and researchers should protect the

¹⁰ For more details, see the pdf. http://videocast.nih.gov/pdf/ohrp_appendix_belmont_report_vol_2.pdf accessed 24/04/2015

identity of participants. I conducted the research with all interviewees' voluntary cooperation and I recorded the whole interviews with their permission. They all clearly knew that I conducted these interviews for my master research and I will not use this information for other purposes. In one case, my respondent did not want to talk about her grandfathers' job during communism time in detail and she kept saying "it makes me horrified". In this situation, I did not go further to ask for details.

4.7 Data Quality and Study Limitation

During the data collection, there are difficulties. Sometimes interviewees have their own idea to express and we cannot follow the question structure. It just gives me more work to categorize answers to different questions. In some cases, my interviewees provided me the information they know at their best; for some, if they did not know clearly, especially in what regards their family memory, they provided me information after confirmation with their parents. The data about post-communism changes is not always focusing on memory. Sometimes the talk turned to social problems, political scandals and so on. However, those data are also helpful for me to evaluate how do they think of post-communism changes in Czech society. The language can be a possible factor to influence my research data, but I lowered its influence at my best. When I could not be sure of what did they mean, I rephrased their answer and I asked them to confirm that I understood the information correctly. All my interviewees study in English language programs so their English language is relatively good. Though English language is not mother language for both my interviewees and me, we rephrased and asked questions to make sure we understood each other in spite of the cost of longer time for the interviews. There frequently happened that interviewees did not know how to express their thoughts in English and they chose to use the digital translator in the smart phones. In one case, when the interviewee could not find the proper English word to express his idea, his girlfriend (with a better English level) was here to help him to find out the proper expression.

This study only focused on students in Charles University, and majority of them are from middle class families. Therefore, their view and memory cannot reflect how the whole generation thinks (which is also not my aim in this study). Therefore, my research actually cannot claim to disentangle how generally Czech young

generations from various backgrounds remember communism and post-communism. However, I think it is still valuable to understand how these elite students remember and think of both communism and post-communism. They are individual beings and their memory is also many times “subjective” but they also bring views of their social context in the interview process. Due to the fact that my Czech language ability is not acceptable, it would be unrealistic for me to attempt to conduct interviews with young Czech students who did not attend university or cannot speak English language. Also because of the shortcomings of the snowball method, perhaps this research cannot reflect all the possibilities of memory formation among Czech students in Charles University. There must be some different ideas about what and how they remember communism and post-communism. Further research in this topic is nevertheless needed. However, with the present study I don’t attempt to claim that I offer an all encompassing perspective on Czech students’ memory of communism and post-communist transition. Actually I don’t think that the “all encompassing” perspective on memory is achievable. My limited aim in this research is to survey and analyze the memory frames and contents in the case of elite students from Charles University.

5. Results and discussion

In this chapter, I will firstly demonstrate the finding of unwillingness of talking about communism among Czech young students. In the second part of this chapter, I will deal with the memory of communism and analysis on the results. I would like to demonstrate my finding on family memory, school memory, and memory from other way, and how those memory formed. In the second half of this chapter, the result of memory on post-communism will be shown and analyzed. I divided the memory of post-communism into three categories: memory on transition and development, memory on European integration and globalization and memory on life changes with technology advancement

5.1 *Unwilling to talk about communism*

During the research on memory of communism, I found that many young Czech students are unwilling to talk about communism. In contact with potential interviewees, four students rejected to have the interview. They think that communism is passed and not related to life. They have nothing to talk about it. In the later interview, five students also demonstrated observations on general indifference towards communism among young people. They commented that ordinary Czech young students have no interests and knowledge on communism. One interviewee even showed worries for whether I could find enough young students for this research. General ignorance—having too few knowledge—can be a reason. Provided by participants, the history courses in secondary school focus on ancient history not modern history, and the textbook only provides very basic facts, like communist party took power in 1948, Prague Spring in 1968. As the major institutionalized channel for young students to learn about the past, the history course failed to offer students the chance to gain enough knowledge about it. Furthermore, they can hardly obtain information from parents. According to interviewees, their parents also felt reluctant to talk about communism: “parents never talked about it until being asked”, “they think it passed and have nothing special to say”, “they never talked about communism”. Jan Čulík described in his article *Czechoslovakia under Communism: Popular Opinion*¹¹ that parents of his students were also reported

¹¹ The whole article <http://blisty.cz/video/Slavonic/Czechoslovakia%20under%20Communism.htm>

to refuse to talk about communism. With the observation of interviewees and situation reported in the article, generally younger students cannot obtain knowledge from their parents as well. Therefore it is not strange for some interviewees to consider the communist experience as “history”, an academic subject, not also as memory of parents and grandparents. The communist experience of the nation was widely considered as “history” and not related to young generation’s life.

Secondly, communist past is considered as a shameful history, thus people refuse to talk. Interviewees think that “maybe Czechs feel shame of it” and “It is such a tragedy for the country”, so “people do not want to recall the bitter experience”. For many Czechs, building identity connected with communism is least thing they want. After collapse of communism and dissolution of Czechoslovakia, Czech nation confronted with the challenge of presenting itself with new image to others and building new identity for itself. The nation attempted to recover its robbed identity as liberal, democratic and European, which can be reflected as the slogan “return to Europe”. Czech Republic rejected the communist image being closed, paranoid and hostile against surroundings. They tried to wipe away the communist shadow to build new Czech identity (Kürti and Skalník.2008) by emphasis of “Europeanness” and civic values features (Fawn, 2003). The new Czech identity would be as far away as possible from what it used to be during Communism. For the post-communist Czech government, the least thing they want to keep is the connection with communism. The streets, cinemas and squares were quickly renamed and the images of communism, like soldiers and farmer, red stars were removed nearly overnight (Wintle,1996). With those intentional policy and measures from 1990s onwards to strengthen “European-ness” and weaken “communism-ness”, communism was intentionally ignored from the above.

Thirdly, some may think they are not qualified to talk about it. Given the fact without any first-hand experience in communism, all knowledge they knew is learned or told. It should be very understandable for younger generation to refuse to talk about communism for the sake of accuracy and reliability. This can be one reason for very few well-educated people.

5.2. Memory of Communism

In the memory of communism, I would like to present it as the origin: family memory, school memory and memory from other ways. Within the family, I divided the memory into negative and positive category, because family memory is the only *le lieu de memoire* with positive memory on communism. As the Russian issue was specially mentioned related to family memory, I listed it as part of family memory. After presenting and analysis of communism memory, I will analyze how communism memory formed case by case and how memory exert influence on attitude towards communism among younger generation in Czech Republic, and views of young students on the aftermath of communism and communism nostalgia.

5.2.1 Family Memory

The overall memory of communism among Czech young students is negative: no freedom, live with fear, no real political rights, short of daily necessities. I would like to present the negative memory in category of education, work, daily life and politics in the first part. The relatively positive memory was about stable live, affordable commodities, free education and health care.

5.2.1.1 Negative Memory

The negative memory of communism consist of deprived opportunities for university, no freedom, central control from the authorities, fear in life, absurdities, shortage of daily necessities, and persecution.

In terms of education opportunities, the memories were not desirable for family without working class background. Parents and grandparents of three interviewees could not receive university education because of backgrounds, though they were clever enough to pass exam. One's grandmother was banned to enter university. She ended up with high school diploma. "She was very unsatisfied about this. And my mother could not go to university because of background as well." Another one's mother with non-working class background was admitted by university. She had to join Youth organization to do public voluntary work. After that, she also had to write one motivation letter to declare her loyalty to communism and strengthen her will to serve the country. One interviewee's father was from a very rich family. His father

finally studied in University for mathematics, with extra effort. He studied very hard and saved time from his work for learning. The local community did not give him permit for exam because he was not from working class family. He finally managed to take the exam and obtained very high score. Later he became the Candidate of Science. It is unfair for gifted students to not be allowed to higher education.

The military course was remembered as compulsory part of university education for males. One's father had military classes in university alongside mathematics study. He was bullied in the military class. "Bullying was very common in army. The training is rigid, harsh and useless". One commented it is stupid that college students had to take military courses. His father thought he did not learn anything from it. "It just wasted of time." One interviewee remembered her mother was isolated and even be looked down by teachers and majority of classmates, because her grandfather was considered traitor. Her grandfather was accused of betraying the communist state due to stealing the Nazi blueprint in cooperation with CIA in 1940s and having connection with West Germany. Her mother only had several friends and they always played together. Others would not play with them and even laughed at them. She also could not be able to go to school trips as she was excluded for many other activities.

Some absurd things can also be the factor to impact people's chance for education. One interviewee's uncle could not go to university, "because someone from the top said they could not accept him" without explanation. One's grandfather could not go to university because "he wore a suite on purpose in a situation all students were required to wear a communist Youth Uniform". He got bad evaluation from teacher and because of that, he could not be admitted by university. One's relative was in the protest (1950s) so the son of the relative cannot go to university. One interviewee's mother went to university. But she was afraid of being rejected, because her cousin fled to American in 1970s. From their description, the absurdness of communist time is one of their major memory and they showed the fear and anger for uncontrollable destiny within communism regime.

From those descriptions, the family class background was very influential for their memory. For those not from working class family, the chance to go to university was very narrow. Working class students also had the fear of losing the opportunity.

Restriction and instruction from the above are major features of memory concerning working. The working life was planned, both in the city and countryside. People could not decide how they do their work. “My grandfather cannot be allowed to run his business as he wished”. He had to obey the government’s instruction on his business. The profit was limited. He can only do business with Soviet Union and other socialist countries. One grandfather’s farmland was taken by the government and they had to join the union of farmers. “At that time, people had no choice but to join it”. One mother worked as technician to take care of animals in collective farm of the village. She had to follow instruction from above. “Sometimes it was very hard because the target was unrealistic”. The communist work seems to them as no-freedom and restriction.

Memories of shortage of commercial commodities are displayed. People needed queue for daily necessities or years wait for flat. One’s father slept on the street for queuing for a washing machine. And one’s parents have waited one year for telephone. Interviewees from Prague remembered years of waiting for flat: “my mother had waited for nearly six years for her flat. Eventually she got it, but at 1993 (The flat institution was still functioning)”. Another family waited much longer for the flat and rejected it: “after my mom graduated from university in 1979, she applied for flat of her own. It was not until 1990 that she was finally offered one room with shared kitchen and toilet with others. She rejected it.”

Voting was frequently described not as a right but a forced obligation with fear. For those with non-working class background, they passively took part in political activities to show resistance to the regime; while for those from working-class, they usually did not care about politics and did not treat voting specially. One proudly talked that his father always held the critical view about the regime. “He was smart to take leave for work to avoid the stupid voting (At that time, if you did not go for voting, you probably had problems). He used this way to avoid any cooperation with the stupid political system.” One interviewee’s grandparents tried to avoid the voting, “because the laziest man in the village joined the party and became active member of communist party. They disliked it”. Interviewees described avoiding voting with heroic tone. To give the right of voting up was remembered as brave may to express angry to the regime. One said though her family had to vote, they never went to May

Frist March and only reluctantly and passively cooperated with the regime. “They feared to do it openly, but they tried to keep away from the regime”. To listen to West music was considered rebellious to the regime. “My mother listened to some west music which was banned at that time. Grandma asked her to have that quietly, because it may cause problems.” The action softly against the regime was the safe way to express real political view at that time. People feared the authorities so that they did not openly oppose the regime.

The year of 1968 was important turning for some Czech people in term of political attitude. Before 1968, some still believed the communist leaders could find way out. After 1968, they did not have any hope about politics, “but they still vote due to fear of possible troubles from the regime, like no opportunity for university or losing job”. Living in fear was also one feature of communism. One’s mother worked in the municipal hall of home village. She almost knew everyone in the small village. But she could only complain about her work and politics to family members, because she could not trust others. “Everyone might work for secret police”. For majority of ordinary people they did not care about politics and they voted. One interviewee said his grandparents came to vote at that time. “There is nothing special to talk. They had to vote for communist, no matter who.” Others also think there was nothing special to talk about voting. It was normal that people had to vote for some communist. They stressed that ordinary people did not care about politics. They care their own life. The privileged position was remembered: when the party members had meeting, they could not work, leaving their work to others.

People also remembered life of be-checked in communism time. One interviewee had a relative fled to West Germany when he did military service near border. “He was bullied in the army, which was very common in army.” Her mother’s family was checked by communist officials after his “defection”. “But the officials did not affect the family a lot”. It was in 1980s. Her family members could feel something would change. “But they fear Russians will comeback again”. The terrible experience of persecution was remembered as trauma of victims’ family. One interviewee’s grandfather was persecuted by communism regime. He was arrested in Slovakia around 1950 because of having connection with Germany¹² and collaborating most

¹² Grandfather had a Germany wife. After he was arrested and sent to prison the German wife came back to

likely with the CIA¹³ to steal blueprint of Nazi Germany in 1940s. Later he was sent into prison. Afterwards he got shipped off to Jachymov, a uranium mine, to do nearly slave work. He met other prisoners and various people like catholic priests and engineers. One engineer probably saved his life by telling him not to eat or drink anything while in the mine, and to wash himself in the thermal springs that were in the mine before went out. “Many of his workmates did not live past fifty, even less, dying of cancer.” After eight years unprotected slave work grandfather was rehabilitated and released. However, “his family in Slovakia gave him up because they were communists”. Grandfather stayed in Moravia and found a job in another uranium mine- Dolní Rožínka, close to Tišnov. During his released life, every now and then communist officials would come to their home to “check up him to make sure that he was not up to anything”. Her grandfather was seriously persecuted by the regime. The description of “because they were communists” demonstrate how hateful she is to communism. Due to the accusation of grandfather, her mother was also influenced.

5.2.1.2Positive memory

In the family memory, there are still some very positive images, though very few. In terms of communist memory on education, positive aspects strengthened by family then with working class background. The positive aspects of past were used as contrast to criticize current situation. The idea of free education was welcomed: “grandparents cherished the chance for free technical study. Education was free, not like now, a financial burden to family.” Everyone had the chance for study. Teacher was respected and valued even more than now. One interviewees’ grandmother was the vice president of a high school in communist time. Her grandmother was very happy because teachers were highly valued and respected at that time, much more than now. They think in communist time, there was a better sense of community. People cared each other, with closer relationship and more communication. However now, people only care themselves. The relationship between family members also is not as close as it used to be. Some people had the chances to go abroad to study with government funding. One remembered that her mother liked the chance to go to

Germany.

¹³ The interviewee cannot make sure whether it is CIA, because his grandfather has passed away. She knew it from her mother.

France for study with scholarship to cover all cost. The mother and her classmates were shocked by how flourish the France was, but none of them chose to stay in France. “It was in 1980s, and the life in Czechoslovakia was not bad for them”. They would have stable life and expected bright future in home country. One interviewee’s father studied nuclear physics in university. He also studied in Soviet Union to learn how to run nuclear power plants. “He was highly valued and respected as an expert in this field”. One interviewee clearly said that her parents were satisfied with their communist education experience, though none of her family member went to university. “Without a university degree, father still got very good payment from a car machine factory”. Her family was very satisfied with the education they had, compared with present: “now a university degree cannot guarantee good life”. Currently Czech young students face up with the pressure for employment. She commended the less competitive life in communism. One student’s mother was also satisfied with her school life. After graduated from high school, she worked as shop assistant and lead very quiet and stable life. Traveling to Russian was special rewards to outstanding students in communism time: “there were competitions for school kids. The winners can go to Russian for short time traveling”. One interviewees’ mother enjoyed it. “She liked her school experience in total. She cared more about her personal life, not politics.” It seems that if people were not politically minded, they could enjoy the ordinary communist life.

Travelling as benefits of communist work were typically mentioned. The outstanding employees could have vocation abroad often. One grandmother was the manager of organization dealing with money. She had vocation to Soviet Union, Central Asia, and Caucasus as rewarding very often. One grandfather was major director of high school. He travelled to Soviet Union as reward for his hardwork. Even shop assistant in village had rewarding trip to Black Sea. They were satisfied with the working benefits. The vocation rewarded by the government normaly to socialist countries. The professional skilil training also tend to be in Soviet Union and other communist countries. One father thinks in communist time, there was more opportunities for poor people and better support for sports. He was an athlete in the Czechoslovakia national team for a while. He could travel to abroad to different countries, like the Switzerland, Belgium, Germany for competition and training. He was from very poor

family and was lucky to become an athlete. He think now the opportunities for someone like him is narrow.

The stable life and affordable living in communism were remembered as criticism to the current competitive and unstable life. The job was guaranteed, and the price was not expected to rise seriously. Even a very normal work can make sure a relatively good life. "Everything at that time was affordable for ordinary people." The shortage of daily necessities and long waiting for commercial goods even was described as "only problem". People felt stable and secure "because they knew that their wages was enough for life." In the past, people could enjoy high quality of health care, while now the higher quality of health service is expensive, not affordable for everyone. They tend to think that life for ordinary people in communism is easier than now. One remembered his grandparents' life in communism was much easier than now. "They only had to hand over crops to the Common Agricultural Organization. They had house, work and health care. They were happy." This kind of memory was more from grandparents. Grandparents' generation now have to face up with higher living cost within limited pensions. Interviewees from countryside did not mentioned years waiting for flat, even for Brno as well. One interviewee's grandparents obtain one flat when they got married and lived here for forty-five years. "Flat shortage was not very serious in Brno." She did hear any experience of years waiting in Brno. Flat was also an incentive for young people to get married, because after got married they could had their own flat.

Some considered that the life for working mother is easier in the past, because there were satisfactory nursery care sponsored by state. "My grandmother had three sons. Though she was a shop assistant, she never had problems to breed them up. There was public nursery care. She had almost everything she need even with small wage". One grandmother worked in a factory producing sowing machine. Her work was very busy, but she did not have problems on raising her three children. The factory had good nursery service to take care of children for workers. Some female interviewees tend to think that in communist time, the opportunities for male and female are equal, with higher-level gender equality. The government encouraged women to work.

The memories of family from working class background are more positive, because they generally benefited from communism. They enjoyed free education, and some of them can study with government funding abroad, to East and even West. Even a high school diploma can guarantee people a stable life. When they talked about the positive aspects of communism, some interviewees tend to explain the positive memory as “do not care politics”. One interviewee felt embarrassed to talk the positive feeling on communism. She may felt to talk communism positively means her family had cooperated with the totalitarian regime. The positive memory of past is also used as criticism to current society.

5.2.1.3 Memory about Russian

Due to the close relation between communist Czechoslovakia and Soviet Union, many memories were about Russian. They generally had very negative memory about Russian. The Russian issue was very sensitive for in education field. Everyone had to learn Russian. One grandfather studied Russian as major. He did not like Russian, but he had to learn it. Another grandfather also studied Russian language as major in university and he had the chance to study in Soviet Union. “He did not like it”. It was required in high school to learn Russian language as compulsory course. Many of them disliked it. Concerning compulsory Russian language course, they all showed their family members were against it. The imposed Russian language course means submissive to the Soviet Union. One said she felt shameful Czechoslovakia’s leaders, because they were too submissive to Soviet Union. The Prague government was puppet, controlled by Moscow. One grandfather was director of a uranium mine for nuclear power plant to produce electricity. “At that time most of economic set in a way favorable to Russian. We exported uranium to Russian in a low price”. Grandfather frequently travelled to Russian, and he disliked it. Russians were privileged during the communism time. “They were above Czechs. Russians could cut the queue for goods, ignoring the queuing Czechs. They were arrogant”. Now, many Czechs still hold the negative opinion about Russian.

5.2.2 School Memory

Education, especially the compulsory school education, is considered as the official institutionalized way for national education. When we consider how the official memory was installed among young students, the communism memory from school

is worth of investigation. The memories of communism from school are all negative. Generally speaking, almost all my interviewees claimed that communism was not important in their study. Due to the difference among education system in Czech Republic, interviewees firstly learned about communism at different ages. The teacher's preference in history teaching is also a frequently mentioned factor for learning on communism. Normally history teachers would not like to deal with too much on this topic. Only one mentioned literature course in secondary school is influential as part of her memory on communism.

For majority of interviewees, they had class about communism when they were in grade nine or ten. Many of them cannot remember what exactly they had learned, leaving some impressions: "just some facts, and dissidents killing. It was evil", "violent, restrict, rigid control on almost everything". In junior high school, the modern history was planned in the end and communism history is not important for their exams. One said he only knew after Second World War, it is a terrible time named communism. Many people were killed only because they had their own idea, which was against the regime.

The senior high school memory focused on the communist crimes: persecution, no freedom, central control, restrict, political trials, invasion by Soviet Union. The memory in senior high school is in more detailed, not just about the historical facts. In the senior high school, they had the chance to learn the history more detailed. One remembered she attended a discussion class about why communism failed. She said the initial conception about communism was monstrous and evil. She specially mentioned what happened in 1948. Communists "persecuted people, controlled other parties". The history teacher taught how evil the communist party was. "In communist time, people cannot express themselves freely. Diversity was not encouraged and people expressed similar idea." One said her senior high school only left her the rough idea about communism: "it is violent, restrict, rigid control on almost everything". She even could not remember any detailed history facts from this time. One student's most influential memory about communism is from literature in gymnasium school. The literature was about the official and underground literature in communist time. "The official literature in 1950s is unreadable". One novel helped her understand what is the socialist realism. "It is so ideological and I could not read

it". She considers that literature is an excellent way to grasp the atmosphere of that time. She commented that those literature works, officially published in 1970s and 1980s, are much better than that of 1950s, with "more complicated ideology and reflect the diverse aspects of communist life in a more human way". From literature reading and study, she was against the idea that simplistically to label communism as evil like monolithic block. "Sometimes it was not as worse as other time". In general, she thinks that officially published literature is too ideologically dominated as part of propaganda. "The underground literature or those published abroad reflected real life of Czechs without obvious inclination". One said he began to learn about communism in the final year of grammar school. He only got the impression on harsh political trials and the invasion of Soviets. He strengthened his knowledge of communist history in university. "Two of my lecturers, working in the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, offered many articles on research of political trials in 1950s and secret police." In university study, he deepens his understanding on the communist crimes. Another one also agreed that actually he did not know very well about communism until university. He "had courses on the communism history and planned economy to learn why the system is doomed to fail, as it cannot make people's life better". Not all the memories are just about crimes and killings. The scene of long queue for commodities, like banana, is kept due to picture teacher showed. Another situation was connected to one's school memory: "Russians were privileged during the communism time. They were above Czechs. Russians could cut the queue for goods, ignoring the queuing Czechs and they were arrogant". She had this impression from one film clip shown by history teacher.

The schooling memory concerning communism mainly come from history course and occasionally from literature course. The common comments about secondary school in communism are "not sufficient" and "not important". As the history for communism is not important in history teaching, how teachers run this class became essential on their study memory on communism. Some teachers recommended students to read books by themselves and asked their grandparents, or actively provided visual texts for students; while some tended to ignore it. My interviewees did not learned too much about it in class. Their overall impressions of communism are fairly negative based on basic history facts they remembered about the killing, secret police and invasion.

5.2.3 Other ways to know about communism

The most frequently mentioned ways for knowing communism are books, films, articles and documentary. This way provided them memory of people's life in a more vivid way, compared what they had in school. Given the fact that communism is rarely topic in younger generations' daily life, they turned to explore the communist past usually after had history or literature class. Not every interviewee tried to find more on communist history. Five interviewees confirmed that they had intentionally attempted to find more information on communism except asking family members. One went to National library to find books after class, but it was not interesting to him. He read some chapters on dissidents' life. "Many intellectuals were put into prison just because they can think with free will". She remembered one dissident's wife was interrogated by secret police and the pregnant wife lost their child. Another dissident received death threats in tapped telephone. He also once received a coffin with his name on. Some read books about Havel and memoirs of some victims. The online resource about communist Czechoslovakia is abundant. They watched films, documentaries, read articles and memory articles online. This is the major way for them to know about communism by themselves. Unfortunately, they hardly provided their detailed memory about content of films, or books. It just left them impression: "the authorities controlled everything. If people did not cooperate with regime, they may lose their jobs, opportunities of university study of their family members". In those ways, they also obtained visual memory about the daily life of communism, as supplement to their school teaching on communism. Nearly four interviewees mentioned the scenes of Russians cutting the queue, arrogantly speaking to Czechs, and poor quality of communist productions. One had a school trip to communist concentration camp and after that she read one memoir book of worker in this camp. "Prisoners were forced to mine for making bombs for Soviet Union, without protection. The trip and book expressed me with similar brutal way to torment human. Communists had committed crimes like Nazi." One read articles about how communist leaders of Czechoslovakia were submissive to Russians. "Czechoslovakia's leaders were loyal to Soviet Union. Communism was not Czech's choice. It was imposed by Russians." She thinks it is communism that hindered the development of Czech nation. "We were one of most industrialized regions in the world. After the Second World War, we were still richer than Austria. Now, though

we are still not bad, we are not as developed as Austria”. One commented a popular Czech TV series reflecting the family daily life in communist era as “not objective”. Her parents watched that but she did not. She remembered from one film named *Báječná léta pod psa* (*The Blissful Years of Lousy Living*), “the hero cannot do the job he wanted to. His fate was significantly influenced by his political attitudes”. She commented that this film reflected how the majority Czechs’ memory and attitude to communism. One got the vivid understanding of the history from 1984. “Teacher recommended us to read 1984 to know how the society was like”. This book left her emotionally fear and nausea on communism: “I was cold, totally cold. It was so terrible. I cannot believe my grandparents, parents have lived in a society like this”. Another one remembered communism as grey, red stars, killing and restrict life from one documentary.

5.2.4 How memory formed

After categorizing and displaying all the memories to demonstrate what do the younger generation remember about communism, I would like to analyze how they have formed certain memory and idea about communism case by case by weighting different factors. Considering the memories I collected from school and other ways are nearly all negative, the family memory became essential for their views about communism. The overall attitude about communism is negative among all interviewees; however, they hold different views on how to evaluate it. Some tend to think communism is all evil and blame it to hinder Czech society’s development; while some prefer to think that communism was not as atrocious as it was assumed by younger students. Therefore, I divided all cases into three groups: one group considering communism evil with family memory being victimized, one group viewing communism neutral with positive family memory, and one group thinking communism evil while with positive family memory.

It is obviously understandable for those with family memory of being persecuted and being deprived are generally against communism for its ideology and the actual practice. One participant’s family is very religious and because of this his whole families have not any positive memory and attitude about communism. Their properties were taken. Family members could not receive university education. His grandfather could not have freedom to do his business. He was told about

unfortunately experience of his families when he was young. The later study in school and university had strengthened his lousy impression on communism. He was not just against the communism practice but also the ideology itself: “communism is unrealistic as societal practice”. He considers the ideology itself is immature and problematic. The communist practice, he thinks “it even betrayed the core idea of communism. The communist Czechoslovakia dispossessed freedom in study, work and thinking”. Another one’s father came from rich background and her grandmother’s house was deprived. Though her father attended university and her mother was benefited with overseas study in France, she is still strongly against with the communism, both on the ideology and practice as well. Though her mother’s family “did not have any victimized experience, they still lived with fear and without freedom”. Her grandparents did not care about politics and they consider current life is improved compared with past. Her family narrative about communism is prominent in shading her idea to communism. The communist period was a repressed period with fear, scare and unlimited state power involved in private life for her. Another one’s mother could not study in university, and the property of grandparent’s was nationalized by government. Her reading on socialist realism literature and on experience of dissident intellectual also confirmed her family narrative of atrocious communism. When being asked about communism nostalgia, they tend to think that the older generation just missed their youth and past life, not the regime; and some lazy people wanted to be taken care of by state instead of by themselves. The girl, whose grandfather was truly persecuted by the communist regime (being sent to prison and forced to work in uranium mine), holds the view that communism was indeed very awful, but not all communists, or party members were. She also reads some memoirs of communist victims to understand better of her grandfather’s misfortune. She does not want grandfather to recall the imposed injustice and misery of fate on him. Due to their family suffering in communist time, it is reasonable for them to form this attitude. They all considered their family experiences were essential to shape their memory of communism.

The second group only consists of three cases with relatively positive experience and mild attitude towards communism. They tend to admit there was still something not bad, like security, nearly full employment, free education and health care, gender equality, closer family bond. They compared it with current society, and they think in

the past the society was less commercialized and less corrupted. One's grandfather commended corrupted officials in communism time will be killed. This memory showed the unsatisfactory attitude on the current corrupted society. One girl's family members are all from working class and attended university. Her family had very stable and happy life. She mostly agrees with the communism ideology to create equal opportunities to all citizens. Her family and she hold the view that good life should not be struggled to achieve, and free education, free health care and equal chance for employment are essential. However, she dislikes the Stalinism, which she thinks it is better to describe the Czechoslovakia's harsh ruling in 1950s. She also approves the gender equality policy in communism time and the financed nursery service enabled women to realize themselves. Though her family memory concerning communism was broadly positive, she still does not think communism is something desirable. Since the current life is much better than what she knew about past, and with the study in school, she understands that communism was not the good choice for state; however, she wanted to warn others that communism was not totally evil. People still could somehow lead ordinary life. She was strongly against to holding simplistically monolithic view on communism. Another girl's family has working class background as well. Her family members were managers and directors in state-owned factories. They could enjoy vacation in Germany, Austria, Soviet Union and Black Sea and could afford foreign commodities. Her family members lead affluent, stable life and had almost everything they need. She thinks that maybe communism was strict to intellectuals, but for ordinary people, they could have quiet life at that time. "My grandparents do not care about politics. What they want is just to have happy family life". They do not think communism was only about violence, killing, banishment, and strict control as others probably assumed. She considers that now people, especially younger generation have focused on the "dramatic" and brutal aspects of past. Those facts are true, but quiet life for ordinary people was also true slice of communist life. The third one's grandparents lived in countryside and she said that they were very satisfied with their life. Grandparents felt the communist life stable, quiet, secure and also happy. However, they all acknowledged the overall communist ruling as trauma and scar for the country like others. They are against communism, but they are also against the idea that communism was all black. When judging which is the controlling factor for the attitude to communism, the first one considered family memory. However, though she criticized communism least

severely among all participants, she still agreed with that communism was doomed to fail and to be replaced by a more efficient and civilized system. They had demonstrated certain degree of disagreement with the conception of total evil communism. However, it never means that they welcome communism. The phenomenon that they hold negative idea about communism in spite of with overall positive memory illustrates that the family memory is actually the mediation in forming their attitude. Though they all claimed with very rough memory about their schooling, the “correct” thesis from school had planted in their brains. Their family memory assisted them to understand communism life with some “human” aspects. As they all described that only after the class, they began to find further information about communism, the history textbooks is the determinant factor on the attitude towards communism.

The third group interviewees hold very strong opposition towards communism despite their normal or positive family memory. From their depictions, those families themselves were not victimized or deprived. While they chose to talk miserable experiences of others, like one relatives of grandfather being bullied during military service, or the laziest one in the village being the member of communist party. Especially one girl felt embarrassed to talk about her family memory, as they were communist party members. It also seems that she felt guilt to reveal her family members as communists. She explained that her family members did not care about and understand politics, and what they wanted was just quiet family life. She did not provide enough details about her family memory, but more on comments about communism. It implied that she might think being communists insinuates as perpetrators or accomplice of nefarious communist regime. Confronted with the question on her family memory in communist era, she replied a persecuted example she heard from others. Her grandfather served as soldier on the Czechoslovakia—West Germany border, “only whom approved to be loyal to the regime can serve on border. It horrified” her. She did not know more about her family memory because she was afraid to ask. She studied communist history primarily at school. After she already planted the conception of nefarious communism, she could not accept her family history. This extreme case indicates the narrative written as truth in history books had exerted deeper influence on how this student evaluated communist history. She had accounted the communism was evil and hateful so that the family stories

became unacceptable. Another two cases, their family members were director of high school and manager in factory. They honestly confessed their grandparents believed in communism, even after 1968, which they cannot understand. The two both approbated that the university study enriched and deepened their knowledge and understanding about communism. They criticized communism experience had hindered the development of the country, nearly impaired the Czech mentality as democratic civilization, dismantled the democracy tradition of the nation. In the two cases, they clearly recognized the determinant role of university study in shaping their opinions on communism, not family memory.

In summary, for those whose family had with victimized experiences, it is hard to tell which is the determinant, family stories or school teaching; while with the analysis of interaction between family memories and opinions towards communism, it seems that it is not family memory that plays dominant role in forming attitude towards communism, but the school education.

5.2.5 Aftermath of communism

In considering the relationship between the present and the communist past, almost all interviewees acknowledged the long lasting influence of communism, especially in the socio-psychological level. Political apathy, indifference of society and loss of Czech tradition are three chiefly referred consequences of communism ruling. From the younger students' perspective, currently the older population is not politically active—they tend to complain about the society privately but not make a difference to ameliorate it. In communist period, publically discussing politics might cause troubles so that people turned their attention from politics and public issues to their private life. Though in democratic Czech Republic people have not any fear on free speech, the political apathy remained as “heritage” of communism. The younger students are not satisfied with the current “complain culture”—widely negative tendency towards society among Czech citizens. They are ambitious to transform the society into a more advanced, civilized one, instead of just complaining and doing nothing. Communism was also censured to leave the citizens indifferent to each other because in communist era, people cannot trust others due to existence of secret police. The strait control on public life in communist time also endangered traditional Czech culture. “The Ride of the Kings” in southern Moravia was prohibited by communist

regime, stated by one from his family memory. It is now recognized as intangible cultural heritage. The totalitarian communism is also reproached as cutting the democratic and civil-society tradition of the nation.

5.2.6 Nostalgia?

In the interview with those who had relatively positive memory about communism, I asked whether their family felt nostalgic to communism. The answers are overwhelmingly “no” and they provide explanations: “No. No. No. They do not miss that time”. “They just had ordinary life and nothing special to talk. But I know they do not like it generally, but they miss their youth”, and “what others may miss is their childhood or youth, not the regime itself. I cannot believe people will miss the life with fears. No!”. Some admitted that now maybe some Czechs are nostalgic to the past, but their families not. They think especially for those who were born, studied, worked in communist time, it is too difficult for them to fit well in current society. This phenomenon actually can reflect how wrong and evil the communist regime was, because citizens with the influence cannot adapt life in a civilized society. The nostalgia towards communism is also the weapon for them to demonstrate their dissatisfaction to present. “Yes, now some Czechs are nostalgic to the past. It depends on their backgrounds. Now people have to be responsible for themselves, but in the past the government can take care of them.” “My grandparents feel nostalgic to communist time. They think it was good life. I guess because they were in countryside in their whole life and they did not experience or witness the harsh aspects of communist life. But now we know the whole picture.” People feel nostalgic for everyday life. “The actual life is not evil. My parents lived in countryside and they were not connected with politics.” He thinks that his grandparents was satisfied with communist life because they did not know any other kind. They just cherished what they had. Students think some who are struggling to find a job and make ends meet with growing living cost. Even some young people felt nostalgic to communist past and whitewashed it, because they never lived in communist time and they have problems in current society. They also think generally the old generation suffered in the change of system. They lived with limited pension in a society with rising living cost, and felt life unsecure and un-expectable. “My grandparents tried their best to save more money because they do not know what happened next. They easily became stressed.” Some young people complain about the

old people to vote for communism, because they vote for their youth, health, high school sweet hearts, but not the party.

5.3 Memory of Post-communism

In this part, the memory of post-communism will be displayed with focus on family and personal memory. In the early 1990s, the Czech society witnessed a radical reform to make the country an open-minded democratic society with well-functioning market economy. In the process of “returning Europe”, the Czech Republic society deepened the degree of European integration and globalization. Technology advancement, principally the communication technology, imprinted on memory of younger Czech generation in daily life. I divided the memory post-communism into three topics: the family memory on transition and development, memory concerning European integration and globalization, memory about technical development.

5.3.1 Family memory on transition and development

Some family experienced the radical changes in 1990s while others appeared lead similar steady life like before. Among those about radical change, some family suffered while some seized the opportunities especially during the wild 1990s. There are several stories about sudden shock and hit to families. One was told the harsh years of her family in wild 1990s. Her father was fired in early 1990s. The family experienced onerous time with tight budget and worry about tomorrow. “My father had health problem and he rested a while. He tried his best to find job, but failed.” During that time, her family lived on her mother’s small wage as high school teacher. They had a very difficult time: save every possible coin and mother even did not buy new cloth for three years. Her father later seized the opportunities to start his own business, investing almost all the family saving. She can still remember in her kindergarten age, she could not have fashionable toys, which other children have. “I was not popular during kindergarten and primary school time. I did not the trendy baubles. And I remembered I always wore old cloths.” Father was always busy and mother had to work. Another one’s parents also had troubles to go with in the first several transition years. “They were in their forty’s. They had studied and worked under communist system for too long”. Parents hardly understood what happened in the society at that time. Until his older brother began to earn money after graduated

from university, the financial circumstance of his family improved. His family was significantly suffered from the transition. One's grandparents moved back to their village cottage in early 1990s. They were retired and they preferred quiet countryside life with the limited pension. Grandparents think the city in 1990s was in chaotic and they disliked it. The living cost in city increased quickly and it turned to be difficult to live with limited pensions. The elderly population with most of lifetime in communism could not adjust themselves properly into the fiercely changed society.

However, the period of 1990s is also viewed as an era of opportunities by majority of my interviewees in city and countryside. Their family members seized the chance to start their own business. One remembered his grandfather quickly established a new department in his company in Plzen, for trading to the West after the country open to the world. This new department had developed into the new company in trading later. One's parents worked as managers and held small amount of share of the same company in Prague during privation. Due to the outstanding performance of the company, they achieved financial freedom. One father was a worker in communist factory without higher education. He wisely seized opportunities as entrepreneur with the encouragement from family member to establish his IT company in Prague, which was pretty profitable. One participant's father became a judge in 1997. Living the time full of ambitious entrepreneurs in Prague, her father quitted his respectable job to establish a law firm to deal with business on international trading. One countryside family cherished their freedom on running their own farmland as self-sufficient farmer. They now can decide what to do about their own land. His father founded an agricultural company in the village. They had several years harsh time for paying off debts. He remembered parents worked and studied until midnight. Now his family runs this agricultural company successfully. It was a time of opportunity booming, in both city and countryside, in various industries from trading, IT to law and agricultural. The then young people were lucky to live in a time "everything is possible".

For some individuals the change was less radical. Many of them still kept their job, like teacher, translator in TV. One remembered that it was very common to have a part-time work for extra money, as the steady salary of full-time job could not cover the living cost, with "everything getting expensive". The wildness of 1990s still

exerted impact on those with stable job: one interviewee's mother worked in TV as French and Russian translator. Her mother did the same job but with heavier workload and faced up competition. "Her job in communist time was easier and even with higher salary". The tempo of life in 1990s was speeding up. "It was pressured and worried time for my mother." Some elderly population still could lead the similar life. One girl's grandparents are engineer, doctor and director and they kept their larger amount of pension to live in similar standard of life. They had not any comments on the revolution. They enjoyed their retirement life. In countryside, the radical reform was less visual than in the city. Three of them remembered. Things in countryside were slower than in the city. The privation process also influenced on their family life, but with lesser extend. One even claimed that her parents did not think life had changed a lot suddenly with a clear cut as 1989.

After the wild 1990s, their own memories are more about the rising living standard: with bigger pocket money as getting older, moving to big house or new flat, more new clothes and toys, first high-tech TV, first car and so on. One especially remembered that when he was five years old, his family took long-distance bus for nearly twenty hours to the sea for holiday because it was cheaper. "We would never do this again as it was not comfortable." Wider selection of commodities, service became better, higher quality of commercial goods, the fashionable design of goods also improved was the higher quality life. But one mentioned living cost also rise with the development. It can be very difficult for those living with limited pensions.

The memory of the participants reflected the improvement of living standard after the revolution in the country. They also reflected the change on mindset: parents became ambitious about their children and encourage children to make advantage of the new age, which they could not have. People began to recognize those making great fortune as heroes, because in communist era, to be rich was not valued even condemned. Money became more and more important, and people are also encouraged to make great fortune. Ordinary citizens became more friendly to strangers and open-minded to the world.

The infrastructure improvement was also frequently mentioned as very visual difference from their childhood to now. One lives in the a community, which had very typical communist looking as grey boxes, was renovated as colorful stylish

buildings with various service to facilitate life. The three Prague-ers specifically described how the capital changed: the grey communist flats repainted; historical building had proper protection; old metro stations were renovated; public transport became more comfortable; more tourists from diverse countries visit the city; more people speak English; the city attracts immigrants from Russian, Ukraine, and Vietnam for better life. One even remembered the open of first supermarket of Prague in 1997. Almost the whole city was attracted by the large supermarkets. Another one also remembered the first supermarket opened in her hometown. Everyone watched the long queue for shopping.

According to their family memories, it is not difficult to expect the overall positive evaluation of post-communist development: 1990s is the time of opportunities; the revolution opened the chance for a higher quality of life; it is the high time for risk-taker and millionaire; the general living standard have improved for almost all population. Those family experience and judgments cannot cover their criticism on the “unjustified privation way”, “corruption in early transition”: “the government staff were informed the condition of property and they benefited from it”, “some politicians and their close friends stolen the national property in privatization. They became billionaires at the expense of interest of every ordinary Czech citizen and public trust to government”, “I think the majority of Czech citizens cannot agree with the transition process”, “the transition was problematic and we were not satisfied with it”. Considering the fundamental changes in people’s life and the hateful communist memory, they all agree with that the post-communist development is a great success, but with problems which can be done in a better way.

5.3.2 European integration and globalization

Memories about European Union were from their own experience. Heated referendum discussion on joining European Union and people were enthusiastic to talk about it. Joining EU and Schengen was generally recognized as the most important event to the post-communism Czech Republic and most influential event to young generation’s life.

Having study experience in other European countries is common among younger Czech students from secondary school to university level: “I studied in Netherlands for one semester in high school, and my brother had exchanged to France and

England”, “I studied in Finland with the Erasmus scholarship for one semester. Many of my friends have studied in other Europe countries”. School trips to various European countries also were introduced in even primary and secondary school level. Thus for the younger Czech students they know Europe in very early age. Five participants have school trips to England, France, Spain, and Germany in primary and secondary school. Eight interviewees have studied at least one semester in other European countries. In their growing up process, Europe is part of their ordinary life, not something far away. They compared themselves as more pro West than their grandparents. In the past, because of Iron Curtain, my grandparents came to black sea or Russian for holiday, while now we have a wider choice, like Greece, France, and Ireland. In the process of European integration, doing business with European countries became more convenient. One said his grandfather welcomed the European integration as he could expand his business to the West. “Now he have strongest business contact with France and Netherlands”. It also becomes normal for Czechs to move around Europe for study and work. One plans “to have master study in UK or Germany”. After graduation, she also wants to work in UK, Germany or Ireland. Many interviewees have friends or relatives studying, working and living in other countries. “Europe became borderless”. “Before university”, one from countryside said: “I did not meet anyone talking study abroad, but now it become very common for students to go abroad to study”. Her brother exchanged to UK in his high school, which, she “could not imagine to have in the same age”.

Prague and other parts of Czech Republic also keep up with the global fashion trends almost the same time. One gave an example that around ten years, when his father came back from United States for business trip, he brought one dress for mother. “It was so fashionable. You could not buy it in Prague at that time”. “I can feel after joining Europe Union, we have wider selection of goods, just like in other European cities”, one summarized.

Tourist industry also changed during the European integration process and globalization. Prague has become more charming and beautiful, with buildings renovated and repainted. Old town has more tourist gift shops and the quality of tourist goods improved in the past ten years. One student remembered in around ten years ago, the majority of tourists came from Russian and Germany, while now

Prague's beauty was appreciated by tourists from all corners of the world, like Japan, France, United States. Prague also became more ethnically diverse with globalization with more immigrants, like Russians, Ukrainians, and Vietnamese. When one was in primary school, there were few Vietnamese; however, after high school, it became common to have Vietnamese classmates.

The general English level is improving throughout the past twenty-six years, as the indication of globalization. In the past, English was not frequently spoken, while now "almost every young Czech can speak English". When one interviewee was in primary school, the level of English teaching was not as high as current level. Her family lives in small town and her attended primary and high school here. "My brother grasps English much better than the same age me".

Europe became borderless after 2007 as member of Schengen area. One student remembered when he was seven or eight years old, they were checked passport when travelling to Austria. In the past, though it was not difficult, people had to "do paper work to obtain visa". "I only have my ID card with. I do not take passport." Now they have accustomed with borderless life in Europe. "We grew up in this free and open world", and "honestly I cannot feel any big change in past ten years". EU has brought substantial opportunities to young generation and they can choose to study, work and live in any Europe country.

5.3.3 Memory of Technical development

Another essential change as major memory of younger generation is the technology advancement, especially the ubiquitous usage of computer, laptop and smart phone. The usage of the technology varies case by case, but generally those living in city and with parents working on technology attached their life earlier to technology development. Eight students acknowledged that technology is the most important thing to change their life throughout the past twenty-six years.

One girl's family bought first computer when she was four years old (1995), because his father did business in IT section. Another remembered her family had first computer when she was eight years old. She was excited to see her mother did translation work on it. "Other children wanted to come my home to see it. It was still not very common." One from countryside remembered that his family had first

computer around 2003. He was happy with it because he still was the first among his classmates to have computer.

The communication technology change also played an important role in their youth life. One remembered when he was young he wrote letters to his cousins in Germany. “I frequently contact him by email only after five years. It was much more convenient”. One had her first cell-phone, a Nokia, when she was in high school. “Some other students also had one. But it is still not very common for high school students to have cellphone”. “At first for students cellphone was a luxury thing, but gradually everyone had one”. Internet is even more important to change their life. One remembered he just read Czech newspapers when he was in primary school. At that time, “I can not know what happened in other countries if the newspaper I read failed to report it.” Another one also agreed that when she was young she also only read Czech newspapers to know the world. Later they both read online news to know what happened in other parts of the world. One read American news online as a way to learn English. He felt he was connected to the world and the world was open to him. Another one also gave an example about the influence of Internet on her social life. She had studied in France for two years and due to the Internet, she can keep contact with her friends by email after leaving.

In total the actual personal memory of younger generation is more about the improvement of living standard, European integration and life change because of technology development. The memory of wild 1990s actually comes from parents and their reading. Their comments on the unfair and problematic way of privation, the corrupted politicians, the stolen state property, are less influenced by parents, but more by reading and studying. In the analysis of individual memory of post-communist time among elite young students, the collective remembering gradually emerged, that generally the memory of better life, Europeanization and technology development is the shared memory for Czech students as the most important change in life. They still hold the memory of transition from their parents, but it is less related with their own life. The younger Czech generation had similar memory like young people in developed countries, more specifically Europe. Now there are no longer substantial differences between young people in former East and West Europe (Leccardi and Feixa, 2012). They now shared the similar version of world, similar

standard of life, similar worry about uncertain future, similar challenge in a more competitive world with their west counterparts (ibid). For Czech young generation, communism is indeed passed, though they face up a society with political apathy, complain, and indifference as the remained influence of communism. The transition in socio-psychological level from communism have completed among the younger generation.

6.Conclusion

A one-quarter of century has passes since the fall of communism in Czech Republic, today's Czech people still somehow live with the long-lasting influence of communism, In the research for what and how do Czech young people remembered about communism and post-communism, I firstly verify individual memory valuable in memory study. The collective memory, I tend to define it as solidified memory with materialistic or ritual forms. It can be transformed to next generations, via various visual and verbal signs. The collective memory can be reconstructed, even invented to serve the present purpose. Research on individual memory can examine to what degree the collective memory reaches its goal. Individual memory can also be a chance to expand or enrich or a challenge to the collective memory. To understand what is the memory of communism and post-communism among young people, I did semi-structured interviews with twelve students in Charles University. The memory of communism is more from family stories, less from education and cultural production like film, books. Family memory was presented to be mainly negative. Students not with working class background were deprived of opportunities for university. For those from working class, they also feared to lose opportunities for university. In university, they even could not choose their major and had to take military courses. And everyone was forced to learn Russian language. The memory for working and daily life consist of no freedom for business, instruction from the above, badly treated by Russian, long queue for daily necessities and years wait for flat in Prague. In political field, some tried to avoid voting as resistance to the regime and people would not like to talk politics publicly, fearing for Secret Police. There are small amount of positive memory of communism: free education, opportunities for ordinary people, teacher highly valued, study abroad with government founding, traveling as rewards of work, affordable price for almost everything, no worry about

life, stated founded nursery service and health care. When talking about the positive memory of communism, respondents usually compared the past with current situation to criticize the problems of present. Communism memory from school education and other ways is overwhelmingly negative. Students learned basic facts and normally left the impression of political trials, persecution, ideological literature, murdered, repression, and censorship. Memory from books and films was also mentioned as one of major way, remembering grey building, red star, persecution, and death threats to dissidents. The family memory provided younger Czech generation more details on ordinary communist life; the education and documentary offered them they more political perspective of the big picture of communism. Given the fact that parents are not willing to talk about it, for majority of them, the school education came firstly in forming the memory, but family memory occupies the major part. By analysis the content of communism memory, it is not strange to find the general negative position among Czech young students towards communism. Personal family memory function as mediation in judgment on communism. Participants with positive family memory tend to be milder to condemn communism, and they claimed it was not as terrible as some assumed. I also find young students felt shameful and embarrassed to talk any cooperation of their family members to regime and explain family members do not care about politics. It indicates that among young people there is conception of binary opposition between perpetrator and victims.

The memory of post-communism is different, as it is the personal memory of young people. The memory of early 1990s' radical change still partly from parents memory, because they were too young to remember anything. The rising of living standard, the gradual European integration and globalization, and the technology advancement consist memory of post-communism memory among Czech young students. The post-communism memory among younger Czechs is overall positive. They consider the post-communism era as full of opportunities, freedom, and more European. They enjoyed traveling and studying around Europe and the convenience from technology development. Their experience and concern about life and society are similar with young people in other European countries. Now there is no clear difference in separating young people in east and west of Europe even in socio-psychological level.

Though younger generation still carry the family memory of communism, communism is indeed passed for them.

This research only display and analyze the memory of communism and post-communism among students in Charles University. Their family generally benefited from the post-communism development and European integration. In memory of post-communist transition, they tend to think it is a time for opportunities. Those who suffered in the turning of the country may share quite opposite memory. The further research can expand the scope to study the memory of young Czech students in various socio-economic statuses and how do they refer the memory of communism based on different attitude towards current life.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Interviewees

No.	Gender	Birth year	time	Hometown
No.1	Female	1994	28.3	Jablonec Nad Nisou (Northern Bohemia)
No.2	Female	1994	8.4	Prague
No.3	Male	1993	8.4	Plzen
No.4	Female	1992	10.4	Prague
No.5	Male	1990	11.4	Prague
No.6	Male	1990	12.4	Village near české Budějovice
No.7	Female	1994	14.4	Village near Prague
No.8	Female	1991	16.4	Odolena Voda, small town in north of Prague
No.9	Female	1990	16.4	Small village near Uherske Hradiste, Moravia
No.10	Male	1990	18.4	Mariánské Lázně in previous Sudetenland
No.11	Female	1994	20.4	Brno
No.12	Male	1991	21.4	české Budějovice